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See *"Fellowship and the Small Congregation"* In This Issue

Volume 7, No. 10 **December, 1965**

Editorial...

LEROY GARRETT, Editor

ACC'S DILEMMA

The dilemma of Abilene Christian College just now is that she is a good college that has visions of becoming a great college, and yet she supposes that she must adhere to those policies and practices that tend to make her a *parochial* institution in order to court support from the Church of Christ. The college desires academic excellence, which is certainly commendable, and yet she is hamstrung by an educational philosophy that hardly makes it possible for the higher circles of the academic world to take her very seriously. To become a great institution she needs to blur her image as "a Church of Christ college," which hardly has a good connotation, and yet she cannot do this since the Church of Christ is the real reason for her existence and the chief means of her support, in terms of students as well as money.

There is nothing new about this problem, for it is as old as religious schools themselves. Harvard was first an institution to train ministers for New England. To become great it had to have more liberal ambitions. Yale was begun because Harvard had become too liberal. But look at Yale today! Both Northwestern and Vanderbilt are recent instances of "church schools" who have broken out of the shell of ecclesiastical relationship in order to go up higher. Butler University was for almost a century related to our own Restoration Movement, being a Christian Church college. A few years back it broke all such ties in order to bear the image of "a cosmopolitan university" in Indianapolis. The fact that Lilly Endowment, Inc., in that city pours millions into Butler no doubt had some bearing on her decision to become independent.

Substantial changes could well occur at ACC also should she fall heir to a 20 million dollar estate from some source independent of the Church of Christ. Such changes will probably come eventually anyway, but they will be much more gradual and with more fear and trepidation. ACC's break of the racial barrier is a good example. Long after the Supreme Court decisions and the integration of state

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schools, ACC, along with TCU, was among the last colleges in Texas to accept Negroes. It was not that the Christian imperative demanded it, for the college had been "Christian" for a half century and had always drawn the color line, but because the Church of Christ constituency would now tolerate it. It is predictable, therefore, that ACC, with her present administration, will not likely venture beyond the pace set by the churches.

Some nations likewise are haunted by the dilemma of having to sacrifice totalitarian control in order to progress in science and technology. Both China and Russia presently face the horns of this dilemma. They wish to direct the thinking of the people into predetermined channels, and yet their desire for world leadership calls for free and expanding minds. They cannot have both. Some of the experts that talked to a group of us professors in Taiwan in 1963 gave convincing evidence that China's vision of excellence would gradually soften her totalitarian attitude. So with Russia. The hope there is the rising army of young intellectuals who do not care to be like dumb driven cattle. Russia cannot have both excellence and regimentation of ideas.

Even I am not fond of the notion of comparing my alma mater in Abilene with the totalitarian scheme of Russian communism or the dictatorial system of Red China, but the parallels are more pronounced than one might realize. Whether it be the Politburo in Moscow or the Faculty at ACC, one must be a member of the *party* to belong. Though it is almost unheard of in academic circles, including Roman Catholic institutions, ACC employs no one to its Faculty unless he belongs to the right church. The youth in Russia is subjected to a prescribed tonic in all his courses that are taught only by loyal members of the party, and he hears no one else nor is he exposed to any ideas except those allowed by the hierarchy. The evidence is that it is not much better than this at Abilene where a student is taught by a member of the Church of Christ (oftentimes a preacher) whether it be psychology, government, physics or Bible. Add to this the fact that the vast majority of the students also belong to the right church and you have a parochialism that discourages real dialogue. Instructors and students alike soon learn what to say and what not to say, and *how* to say what they manage to say.

Such parochialism expresses itself in many ways. There was some demand for the presence on the campus at ACC of a noted TV commentator. The officials rejected the idea on the grounds that he was too controversial. This would, of course, be a desirable trait in the man to a *liberal* institution interested in exposing its students to a cross-fertilization of ideas.

Even such innocuous things as having a Baptist or a Presbyterian clergyman address the students in chapel are unheard of at ACC. Even with the Faculty studed with men who took their graduate degrees at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (admittedly an unpredictable phenomenon!), it would still be risky for one of the honored professors of said seminary to address the student body. It would even be unlikely that a student who belongs to the Pentecostal Church or even the Christian Church would be

allowed to share in leading his fellow students in a chapel service. He doesn't belong to the right church either!

But these are only the more visible sins of parochialism. Below the surface is the fact of indoctrination instead of education. This brings with it the answering of questions that are not being asked, and the giving of canned answers to the questions that are asked. And always there is the feeling that it is just as well for all concerned not to ask *some* questions. Mediocrity, not excellence, is the result.

It is into this kind of environment that ACC hopes to bring young Ph. D's from the top graduate schools. The college is fortunate to have an impressive list of such men already, but we all know that the number falls short of what is expected by the accrediting agencies. So perilous is this condition that the administration has been known to apply pressure on Church of Christ professors in state or private institutions to come to ACC and bolster the Ph. D ratio as a matter of Christian duty.

The hope for ACC's dilemma is, as in the case of China and Russia, within the framework of the college itself. Already there are professors who are saying more than they once did, and they are likely to be saying ever more in the future. The rise of a new and young administration will add more impetus. But the strongest force will be the students themselves. I know, for I read their mail! No power of orthodoxy will contain them much longer. The Spirit of God is at work; and the influence of the Holy Spirit and the regimentation of ideas simply do not mix. The future promises to be exciting in regard to our colleges.

In my logic class at Texas Woman's University we learn that one way to handle a dilemma is to take it by its horns. While it may be that we are not always read with relish on the ACC campus, we would like to suggest ways whereby ACC can take this dilemma that we have described by the horns and thus destroy it. If no more, the suggestions may serve as a prediction of things to come; but we are hoping that it will be more than that, for in some indirect way, if not direct, this appeal may eventually contribute at least a little toward making ACC a better and freer college.

1. *Abandon the practice of limiting the Faculty to Church of Christ people.*

Not only is this a terribly inconvenient practice, which makes the task of recuiting a sufficient number of Ph. D.'s almost impossible, but it is an academic hazard. While it is true that people of the same church have diversity of opinion and are not like peas in a pod in their similarity of views, it nonetheless follows that "the great conversation," which is the heart of the educative process, is not as authentic when the Faculty is parochial. A college forfeits some of its integrity when it fails to employ the best qualified scholar available for an opening. It is conceding that its policies are more ecclesiastical than they are academic when it elects a less qualified man because he belongs to the right church. If excellence is what a college wants, then it should recruit an excellent faculty, the very best that its resources can attract. But we cannot conclude that this is the way ACC has recruited its faculty. Surely the *best* available people did not all happen to

be Church of Christ folk. The rule instead has been that they must *first* be members of the Church of Christ, and from that point on the best available are selected.

It reminds me of the rather amusing ad I noticed in the want-ads of our local Denton paper. One of the churches put this in: "Church needs a janitor; must be a Baptist."

ACC has such a policy, we suppose, because it serves a Church of Christ constituency. The policy assumes that our brethren are better pleased if it is this way. This point could better be argued if the policy called for a *majority* of the staff being Church of Christ folk. It is doubtful if any religious group expects its colleges to be staffed exclusively of their own kind. Our people are certainly not this way about other things. Even in such areas as medicine, surgery, and psychiatry we are inclined to go to the finest specialist we can afford. If a brother in the Church of Christ is equally qualified, we might prefer him, but our first consideration is whether he knows his business, not where he goes to church.

It is evident from the way the very best Church of Christ families persist in sending their children to private and state colleges (despite the protests of the ministers who urge them to send their children where they can get "a Christian education"), that the ACC idea may be invalid.

If ACC had an occasional Methodist teaching English, a Presbyterian teaching psychology, a Roman Catholic in government, a Jew in physics, a Greek Orthodox in foreign languages (let him teach Greek!), and a Southern Baptist and a liberal Disciple in the Bible department, the place would be more interesting! It would also provide a better liberal education, which is what a college should be doing. If the college's aim is to *indoctrinate* instead of *educate,* then this suggestion would only frustrate the program.

A student is challenged when he is exposed to the finest minds of varied backgrounds. He needs to study with men who have views much different from his own. He becomes more sympathetic with conflicting views, and his own beliefs become more responsible and reasonable. He is indeed a better educated man. The ACC Faculty itself is a testimony to the wisdom of my words, for they have all taken their graduate degrees under respected "sectarians." Then why cannot an undergraduate at ACC have a few courses under the same kind of men? ACC seems to think the parents would not want it this way. This could well be a misconception.

2. *Take the lead in providing dialogue among the larger brotherhood of Churches of Christ.*

Here is ACC's great opportunity to contribute substantially to the welfare of the Restoration Movement. The college had a similar opportunity to lead the way in integration, but let it pass. More of our people are now concerned about our divisions and our apathy toward ecumenicity than ever before. A few pioneers have begun the task of building bridges of understanding between our several factions. Thousands are confused about such questions as fellowship and unity. They are looking for bold leadership. ACC would prove itself a college with vision instead of an institution with its ear to

the ground if it opened its lectureships and forums for dialogue between leaders of all groups within Churches of Christ. As of now the forums at Abilene are so pre-determined that it can be predicted what one will say on a given topic. Party men stay on the party line. The exceptions to this are far too few. Let ACC conduct a Lectureship in which *all* the various groups among us are brought together in a dialogue of love. It need not be controversial; debates are not necessary. A theme could be selected for study, as is now the practice, but let it be discussed by brethren who have long since quit having anything to do with each other.

ACC *could* do this, though it would take imaginative leadership as well as patience and courage. If the college could create the image of being a forum for *all* Campbellites, regardless of their peculiar labels, it could be a wonderful blessing to our people. If a Lectureship theme is to be on "The Church Faces the Nuclear Age," let the panels be made up of conservatives, liberals, cooperatives, Christian Church, Disciples, premills, one-cuppers, non-Sunday School, and all the rest. Any brother who showed up with a bad disposition would be so showered with love that he would leave the place a different man.

If ACC should show this kind of dynamic leadership, I am persuaded that brethren everywhere would respond positively, and a new day would dawn for the Churches of Christ. Unity can come no other way. If we wait until we all agree on all these things before we restore fellowship among us, then we'll still be waiting when the Lord comes.

BIRTHDAY MEDITATION

Surely there is no better way to celebrate a birthday anniversary than to engage in contemplation on one's life. I recall while at MacMurray College a few years back a colleague of mine was trying to expain to me how it felt to turn 50, my being at that time not yet 40. About all he could say was that it was a lot different from being 40. Now that I myself am closer to 50 than to 40, I can appreciate his point, though I too feel helpless in explaining the experience of growing older.

Alexander Campbell, who had a lot of humor about him, mentions in his *Millennial Harbinger* that as he grew older his friends were always commenting on his passing years and his greying hair. When they would always say, "Well, you're getting old, aren't you, brother Campbell," he would reply: "I find it very difficult keeping that from happening as long as I keep on living!" Art Linkletter once quipped on TV: "In view of the alternatives available to me, I prefer to keep on growing old."

A more sober way to view it is as Psalms 90:12 does: "So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom." But Ecc. 11:8 is almost discouraging: "For if a man lives many years, let him rejoice in them all; but let him remember that the days of darkness will be many. All that comes is vanity."

Among my first birthday thoughts today was my dear Mother, who has been in her grave some four years, for it is always a man's mother who is the real hero of the drama that brought him into this world. If any birthday gifts are given, the mother should get them! My mother very nearly gave her life for my birth. My father, whose remains likewise rest beneath the sod beside his wife, used to tell me how he would go out into the field to pray that my mother would live, even when the family doctor insisted there was no hope for her.

Today I am thankful to the heavenly Father that he heard the prayer of my father in that dark hour, and that my mother lived on for more than 40 years longer to be a continual blessing to her husband and eight children. Besides life itself, which my mother extended to me while her own hung by a slender thread, I am most indebted to her for showing me how a person can suffer greatly and yet live zestfully. She suffered much more than any woman ought, not only from physical maladies, but also because of ignorance that she could not help and poverty that she could not avoid. Her surgical operations, which were many, were traumatic experiences in our family. For two decades I drew an anxious breath every time a long distance call came for me. I recall sitting with her during the first night after one of those cruel operations that we just knew would kill her. It disturbed me that a good person had to suffer so, and she later told me that that night was the worst one of her life. But she had a way of fighting back, for she had almost 20 more years to live.

As her children grew older and she came to realize the need for self-improvement, she tried to compensate for her lack of schooling by subscribing to various home study programs. Bless her heart, I realize now that she must have felt inadequate for her tasks, but her reservoirs of strength were so great that she had every reason for self-confidence. It was that cruel depression that hurt most of all, and it hurt me more than I realized then. It is one of those things in my life that I don't like to think about, for I cannot answer to my own satisfaction why my parents had to suffer so much. My father once told me that he had never dreamed that the time would come that he would not be able to support his own family, and yet all through my teenage years I watched him waste away among the unemployed.

My mother would pray that our "Room for Rent" sign would cause someone to stop and pay 50 cents for the night. Most of my five grown brothers were out of work. I washed dishes at a nearby cafe after school for a buck a week and my meals, and I knew that I ate better than the family. I recall the times they would come out and turn off the electricity and the gas when we couldn't pay the bills. One of those nights my only sister had a date, and the family pretended that the candlelight and the fire in the fireplace were only for the purpose of a cozy setting. I wonder now if we really fooled him.

I cannot say that I am thankful for those depressing times, but I am grateful that through God's providence I learned some things that have helped me through the years to keep my values straight. And so on this birthday anniversary I am thankful that my parents were able to bear up under hardship and to persevere in their faith. I am thankful for as fine a set of brothers, six of them altogether, as a man could expect to have; and of course a dear and loyal sister who will

stand by a brother as much when he is wrong as when he is right.

Besides all this sentimental thinking I did a few things today. Being a Saturday I had but one class at the university. In this class we discussed IQ tests for children, and my students were surprised to learn that an IQ score is determined as much by the way a child is motivated as it is by the child's intellectual ability. They were also interested in learning that between ages 6 and 10 a child's IQ can vary by as much as 50 points! I've also taught them that intelligence is not something one it born with, but something that can grow as long as one lives, and that we are all morally obligated to become more and more intelligent, each according to his own capacity.

We also pointed out that if a child is not productive in intellectual activity by the time he is 12 or 13, he is not likely ever to be. There is such a thing of course as "the late bloomer." I can always point to myself as an instance of this. I am probably the only Ph.D. in the entire history of Harvard that was a high school dropout, and I am the only university professor that I know of who cannot produce a high school diploma. It proves that the psychologists are not *always* right. At age 16 the psychological prediction for me would have been quite different from the way things have gone. Psychology, of course, can hardly be expected to find meaning in such ideas as the providence of God in a man's life. But I let my girls at the university know of my faith in such things, and they are sometime very much impressed. One of my students wrote home to her mother about "the faith of her philosophy professor." She said to her Mother, so she tells me: "Mom, the man would have made a wonderful minister!"

After class one of our girls asked me if I would talk with one of her girl friends who has become wayward morally. The girl in trouble talks of wanting to be a respectable young woman with religious faith, but she gives herself promiscuously to the boys, and doesn't seem to know why she does, despising sex as she does. I explained to the girl who asked me to see her friend that almost without exception this kind of condition can be traced to severe feelings of rejection in childhood. I predicted that it would take phychoanalysis to help her, but I agreed to talk to the girl with a view to advising professional help. Sometimes, however, I counsel with such girls whom I know will never go to a phychiatrist. I always try to direct them toward a religious faith, and sometimes I pray with them. One such girl comes by my office occasionally with the pathetic complaint, "If I don't talk to someone my head is going to explode." We talk, or rather she talks and I listen, and we pray together. She tells me that our sessions help her more than her psychiatric treatment, which I paid little attention to until she told me that her psychiatrist advised her to try sleeping with the boys in order to get rid of her inhibitions!

All of our girls, of course, do not have these kind of problems! By the time I returned to my office after this morning's class, the president of the sophomore class, of which I'm the sponsor, was there to check with me about the class play that we're to present in competition with the other classes. I thought the theme of the play, which is kept a secret until the night of presentation, was both superficial and pointless, and told the class president so. But due to time limitations we may have to go on with it anyway, improving it the best we can.

I also wrote a letter to an old friend whom I always write on my birthday. The practice goes back many years, long before I became a heretic in the Church of Christ. The friend and I have travelled together and conducted meetings together. He has long since quit responding to my letters, but still I write to him on my birthday as I have for years, expressing once again my appreciation of his friendship. I suppose he feels that it would be some gesture of fellowship if he should answer my letters, and now that I am a heretic he cannot bid me God's speed. Yet he occasionally sends me his felicitations through mutual friends, so I know he still cares. He just has to preserve his orthodoxy. I shall keep writing him on my birthday anniversaries as always, and one of these days love will win out and he will answer one! There is another brother with whom I have been as close as one could be to a father, and for many years I have written to him on *his* birthday. He doesn't answer me either, not since Harvard ruined me and I became a liberal. But I keep right on writing him on his birthday just as always, telling him how much I love him and appreciate what he has done for me through the years. My wife keeps asking me why I insist on writing to people who no longer want to be my friends. I tell her that my love is stubborn!

Later in the day I went bicycle riding with my wife. We are quite a spectacle to the whole town, for we must be about the only couple around that pulls such a trick. But part of it is a tantalizing experience, for when friends pass in their cars they toot their horn and wave a hand, leaving me puzzled as to just who they might be. Some of my colleagues at the university are always telling me when they see me on my bicycle on campus that they ought to be doing the same since it is such good exercise. Anyone who views their expanding midsections would agree that, yes, they ought; but I notice none of them ever does. Furthermore they can't even walk. They'll jump in their car to drive across campus! I try to tell them the best that I can that I don't cycle to the campus for the exercise, but for sheer and simple fun. What is wrong in doing something for fun—yes *fun!*

One of the women professors, who doesn't need to cycle for the sake of her figure, has purchased a bicycle with my encouragement, but has not yet demonstrated the courage to appear on it on campus. She fears it would not be dignified of her. One of my better students stopped me on campus one day when I was cycling homeward. "Prof. Garrett, it seems so incongrous for you to ride a bicycle." I asked her why she thought so. "I've always thought of you as being so dignified." I asked her why she thought a bicycle wasn't dignified. She thought a bicycle might not be undignified, but that I wasn't dignified when riding one! Since then I've made sure to cycle *with dignity.*

Well, life can be and should be fun. That is what I mean by saying that

my mother taught her family to live life zestfully. No one could enjoy a trip, or a meal, or a conversation, or her family like she could.

My birthday was further endowed with a big chocolate cake, unadorned with candles, and small gifts from each of the three children. Philip, my German son, gave me a stamp moistener, which may not have been with disinterest since I'm always having him help in licking stamps. Benjy, my son from the Hoosier state, gave me a typewriter eraser. Phoebe, our Lana Turner from Missouri, furnished me with a datebook for 1966.

And now night has fallen. While the day was yet young my eyes fell upon the prayer that I made my birthday meditation for this year. I read it to my family at breakfast, explaining that this was my prayer for myself and for them, not only today, but everyday. And so it is my prayer for you too, dear reader. It is a devotional that I borrow from the late John Baillie of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

O God, who has proven Thy love for mankind by sending us Jesus Christ our Lord, and has illumined our human life by the radiance of His presence, I give Thee thanks for this Thy greatest gift.

For my Lord's days upon earth:

For the record of His deeds of love:

For the words He spoke for my guidance and help:

For his obedience unto death:

For his triumph over death:

For the presence of His Spirit with me now: I thank thee, O God.

Grant that the remembrance of the blessed Life that once was lived out on this common earth under these ordinary skies may remain with me in all the tasks and duties of this day. Let me remember:

His eagerness, not to be ministered unto, but to minister:

His sympathy with suffering of every kind:

His bravery in face of His own suffering:

His meekness of bearing, so that, when reviled, He reviled not again:

His steadiness of purpose in keeping to His appointed task:

His simplicity:

His self-discipline:

His serenity of spirit:

His complete reliance upon Thee, His Father in Heaven.

And in each of these ways give me grace to follow in His footsteps.

The day of partyism is ending . . . Free communication is being established. Ernest prayer for divine guidance is pervading all Christians of good will. The future is unknowable in all its aspects, but the past should give us hope and courage. We cannot now precisely define the exact terms of ultimate union, but if we turn to the perfect Guide and the guide Book He has given, with pure hearts and willing minds we shall find the way.—James DeForest Murch in *Christians Only*

OTHERS MAY, YOU CANNOT

If God has called you to be really like Jesus, He will draw you into a life of crucifixion and humility, and put upon you such demands of obedience that you will not be able to follow other people, or measure yourself by other Christians; and in many ways He will seem to let other good people do things which He will not let you do.

Other Christians and ministers, who seem to be very religious and useful, may push themselves, pull wires, and work schemes to carry out their plans, but you cannot do it; and if you attempt it, you will meet with such failure and rebuke from the Lord as will make you sorely penitent.

Others may boast of themselves, of their work, of their success, of their writings, but the Holy Spirit will not allow you to do any such thing; and if you begin it, He will lead you into some deep mortification that will make you despise yourself and all your good works.

Others may be allowed to succeed in making money, or having a legacy left to them; but it is likely God will keep you poor, because He wants you to have something far better than gold, namely, a helpless dependence on Him, that He may have the privilege of supplying your need day by day out of an unseen treasury.

The Lord may let others be honored and put forward, and keep you hidden in obscurity, because He wants to produce some choice, fragrant fruit for His coming glory, which can only be produced in the shade. He may let others be great, but keep you small.

He may let others do a work for Him and get the credit for it, but He will make you work and toil without knowing how much you are doing; and then to make your work still more precious, He may let others get the credit for work which you have done, and thus make your reward ten times greater when Jesus comes.

The Holy Spirit will put a strict watch over you, with a jealous love, and will rebuke you for ittle words and feelings, or for wasting your time and money, which other Christians never seem distressed over.

So make up your mind that God is an infinite Sovereign, and has a right to do as He pleases with His own. He may not explain to you a thousand things which may puzzle your reason in His dealings with you; but if you absolutely sell yourself to be His love slave, He will wrap you in a jealous love, and bestow upon you many blessings which come only to those who are in the inner circle.

Settle it forever, then, that you are to deal directly with the Holy Spirit, and that He is to have the privilege of tying your tongue, or chain your hand, or closing your eyes, in ways that He does not seem to use with others. Now when you are so possessed with the living God that you are, in your secret heart, pleased and delighted over this peculiar, personal, private, jealous guardianship and management of the Holy Spirit over your life, you will have found the vestibule of heaven. —*Author unknown*

FELLOWSHIP AND THE SMALL CONGREGATION

While browsing among the new books in a Dallas store recently I came upon Warren Leslie's *Dallas: City Limit.* Since it was published this side of the assassination, I was interested mostly in what it might say about that rather unspeakable subject. But I became more involved with the chapter about Dallas churches, and especially one quotation from Luther Holcombe, president of the Dallas Council of Churches.

"It is the small churches that give me hope. To me it is encouraging to look at these tiny churches all through the city. There's real sincerity of religious conviction in Dallas. This touches me and gives me hope."

It is interesting that President Holcombe would think of "real sincerity of religious conviction" in reference to tiny congregations. He did not mean to suggest, of course, that people cannot be sincere in a big church; but he was making an observation that is apparent to us all, if we stop to think about it, that those in small churches are usually more active and are called upon to give more of themselves to the work. It is reasonable, therefore, to conclude that "real sincerity" is more prevalent. The tiny church hardly ever attracts the man who goes to church because it is good for his business; nor does it appeal to those who are society-conscious. The prominent preachers are seldom with a small church; and the program, budget, and real estate are hardly suitable to pride and vanity.

However one might try to describe its virtue, it is the tiny church in Dallas that touches Mr. Holcombe and gives him hope. The same chapter of the book mentions that Holcombe is impressed when a small band of believers get together and clean the building, mow the lawn, and patch the roof. Perhaps it is this that gives him hope because this kind of ministry is so rare in what might better be called a *metropolitan* church rather than simply a big church.

Even in our own metropolitan churches there is someone hired to do nearly everything, even to the preparation of the Lord's Supper and the filling of the baptistry. The professional minister and office staff keep things running smooth as a rule, and it must be admitted that such organizational efficiency appeals to most people. The average church member in the metropolitan church is hardly expected to do more than to be in his appointed place at the usual services of the congregation and to give of his means. He can get lost in the crowd. Unless the church is very alert by way of some "zone plan" whereby all members are checked, he might well be absent for weeks without being missed.

Perhaps Holcombe realizes that this is what most people want. They don't want to be bothered. Today's church member cherishes the fact that his old Dad used to build the fires at the meetinghouse back home, and he likes to recall how his Mother prepared the Lord's Supper, or how the men would pitch in and share the peaching. But does he want to do such things? Does he not rather prefer to budget a few dollars a week for the church, fill his place in the pew each Sunday, listen to a professional clergy, and otherwise

enjoy the comforts of a rather lavish edifice?

To be sure, some Christians in big churches are as active as anyone else, and certainly as sincere, and Holcombe knows this. But Holcombe seems to be suggesting that Christianity is likely to have a better chance with a man in the tiny congregation. Fellowship itself may be deeper and more meaningful.

Our own Wynnewood Chapel in Dallas illustrates the point quite well, I would think. It is at least tiny. A man like Holcombe would be impressed, as our visitors usually are, that nearly all our members take part in every service. Some sister, not a janitor, will put the Lord's Supper at its proper place, covered by linen she herself has laundered, and consisting of bread that she herself has made. During "the prayers of the church" as many as five or six different short prayers will be said by different brethren. Before the prayers are said the congregation is asked by the presiding brother ta make special requests for prayer. Usually someone who is ill is mentioned by name, or the missionaries in Mexico and Denmark that the group is helping are mentioned, or some special problem is referred to. The prayers include these special, personal requests, making prayer more specific and personal than is usually the case in the metropolitan church when some brother leads the prayer for all over a public address system.

Worship in song is led by at least four or five song leagers, each taking his turn, some being better at it than others, but all gradually improving, and all leading at least one song at every service. The teaching ministry is shared by all the male members. We have not one brother at Wynnewood who does not at least occasionally appear before the congregation with a lesson, and sometimes two or three will appear during the same service. The brethren themselves built the chapel with their own hands, or I should say they are *still* building it, doing a little more when money and time allows.

We are not saying that a congregation *has* to do it the way we do, but we do say that something is lost when brethren have a hired functionary to do all these things for them. It may be the easiest way, but not the most meaningful. I have discovered long since that it is not too difficult to build a wall of brick and mortar, or even four such walls, and fill the area with party-oriented people. But to build a church, even a tiny one, where the intention of the members is *to minister* rather than to be ministered to is a different matter.

About the time I read the statement from President Holcombe I received a letter from a preaching brother of unusual ability, one who could certainly have chosen the way of the big churches, in which he said: "I shall continue with small and weak congregations insofar as my own life is concerned." It is the rarity of this attitude that impressed me. Most preachers insist on going to the larger churches, with the *very largest* the ideal end. Why? We are told that it is because they can do more good there. Perhaps so. But it is strange that so few figure more good can be done with tiny congregations. Then too the tiny churches have a way of wanting to become larger and larger. Why? If there is growth, why not allow more

and more tiny churches to emerge? Did we get the idea of the cosmopolitan church from the New Testament or did we borrow it from the religious culture of our time?

In New Testament times there was only one large congregation, and the Lord providentially dispersed it; and even before the Jerusalem congregation was scattered it may well have assembled in scores of different places, especially in synagogues. It was certainly no counterpart to the big church of our time. And how about the numerous references to "the church in thy house," a characteristic of primitive Christianity that we do not care to emphasize. Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Antioch, and Corinth had small churches of Christ. So with the history-making churches all through the centuries. Big churches maintain themselves, perpetuate the party they represent, and support its institutions, but they are almost never epoch-making. They bring about no changes; by their very nature they yield to the *status quo.*

This is also the case with our own Restoration Movement. It wasn't a big church in Pittsburg, but a small band of saints in nearby Washington, Pa. that produced the *Declaration and Address.* It wasn't a metropolitan church in Wheeling, but a tiny group at nearby Brush Run that called meetings that influenced the future of American churches. Reformations begin in the small churches that have less to lose in terms of party politics. They are more wieldy. Some churches get so large and so involved in the machinations of institutional religion that even its own officers are powerless to bring about changes. The tail wags the dog.

It is to be expected, therefore, that in the efforts we are making for the unity of the Restoration Movement it will be the small congregations and the less prominent ministers that will respond with more zeal. For the most part the cosmopolitan churches will ignore such efforts, or perhaps oppose them if they come within close range. The reason is clear enough: *the big church as too much to lose.* It does not really want a unity of our people, for this would change things too much. It wants no *substantial* change of any kind, for it was present conditions that gave it its existence, and it supposes that only those conditions will preserve it.

One of our ministers told me recently in a moment of candor that he supposed he did not really want the kind of unity I was working for, because it might effect both his budget and his attendance. He did not want his members visiting with other churches, for he might lose them. He worked on a close budget, which included his own means of livlihood, and he had to demand a loyalty to his particular congregation in order to be assured of the proper flow of cash. I appreciated his honesty, but it confirmed the magnitude of our task in trying to reach a church with an idea that by its very nature is antagonistic to the survival of that church. This is to say that the typical church of our time, especially the more influencial ones, is concerned primarily in its own existence and welfare, and in preserving its denominational loyalties. It has a program to support, which has precedence over any ecumenical concerns. Why should it pay any attention to some tiny church that pleads for a unity that would disturb the *status quo.* So the cosmopolitan, party church must, by its very nature, oppose that which looms as a threat to that which guarantees its position.

This problem is intensified by the fact that the trend is for larger and larger churches. The more brethren get themselves committed to budgets, mortgages, and programs the less inclined they are to listen to anything that might rock the boat even slightly. About the only hope that remains in such situations are the concerned ones that quietly and prayerfully work in small groups for a better understanding of what unity can mean to all Christians. Leaders of many denominations see hope in the emergence of the small cells in big churches for a revival of spiritual vitality. These study and prayer groups have no intention of causing dissension or division, but they allow the Spirit to work through them in such a way as to inspire concern in the hearts of others.

We are saying that the task of restoration of fellowship is basically a matter of destroying partyism, which has a stronger hold, as a rule, in the larger, more affluent congregation. But we do not overlook the fact that the Holy Spirit can be at work in *any* congregation, large or small, rich or poor. It is our hope that this journal will encourage more and more concern in more and more places, and that it will play some small part in inspiring brethren to place "the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" above all party considerations. The barriers are real and formidable, but they that are with us are more than are with them. This calls for the faith that can count angels.—*the Editor.*

THE LAW IS SPIRITUAL

OBERT HENDERSON

"For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Rom. 7:14). In spite of the very clear statement of Paul that "the law is spiritual". I have on several occasions heard preachers and Bible class teachers say that it is not. This immediately poses a question. Why do the statements of men about the law conflict with the statement of the scripture about it?

We, of the Church of Christ, quite often talk about the book of Romans being very difficult to understand. And there isn't any question that we generally find it so. But what is the source of this difficulty? Does it stem from the nature of the book, or from some other reason? It seems that it really arises from another cause, and that cause is that we hold a doctrinal position which conflicts with the major argument which Paul makes in the book. The concept of the nature of Christianity which we generally hold prevents an understanding of the theme of Romans.

The major argument of the epistle is that salvation is not by law, but by grace. A recognition of the fundamental difference between these two ideas is essential if one is to grasp the sig-

nificance of the argument. Conceiving of Christianity as a legal system and salvation as a result of law keeping makes the book utterly incomprehensible. As a result, our attempts to harmonize it with our theology often are bewildering to the observer and frustrating to ourselves.

The passage cited above provides us with a very good example of our inability to comprehend the meaning of the epistle. The scriptures say, "the law is spiritual." We generally say it is not. For instance, about a year ago, I sat, as a visitor of the congregation, in a Bible class that was studying the seventh chapter of Romans. Within five minutes after verse 14 was read, the teacher made the statement, "The law was not spiritual."

In some instances our doctrinal views are not in harmony with the scriptures, and we seem to prefer our views to the scripture. By and large, we cannot agree that the law is spiritual and maintain our theological view of the nature of Christianity at the same time. So, we deny that it is spiritual. Let me explain.

We generally conceive of the gospel as a legal system, and hold salvation to be the result of keeping a legal code. In fact, we often use the term, "the new law", to refer to the gospel. Then to compound the confusion, we classify all the New Testament writings as "gospel." The law of Moses was a legal system. Since we conceive of Christianity as a legal system also, we must distinguish between the two on some grounds. So, the distinction we usually make in our theology is that the "new law" is spiritual, while the "old law" was not spiritual. If we admit that the law (that is, the law of Moses, the "old law" as we call it) is spiritual, then our explanation of the difference between it and Christianity is lost. So, in spite of the fact that Paul says that "the law is spiritual", we say that it is not! The distinction we make flies right in the face of the scripture. It strikes me that there must be something wrong with a doctrinal system when it causes one to deny a very plain scriptural statement.

Another question forces itself upon us. What do we mean when we distinguish between the law of Moses and the "new law" by saying one is spiritual while the other is not. From discussing the matter with various brethren in the Church of Christ it appears that the distinction has to do with the clarity versus the ambiguity of the two. The idea seems to be that since the "new law" is rather difficult, and must be ferreted out through the use of various hermeneutical tools, this somehow makes it superior and spiritual.

The law of Moses was very clear, plain and direct. Its requirements were unambiguously stated. For instance, the law told them exactly how to make the tabernacle (Exodus 25-27). Or it told them exactly how the priests were to be consecrated (Exodus 8). Or it told them exactly when and how to make the atonement (Exodus 16:29-34). Or exactly when and how to keep various feasts (Leviticus 24). To understand these did not require any science of hermeneutics, or application of any system of reasoning or logic. It was simple, straight-forward, direct.

But, it is said, the "new law" is different. Instead of any particular law in it being clearly set forth in plain

language, (for instance, the "law of worship") various parts of this "law" are scattered throughout the New Testament writings. Further, these "laws" are generally not explicit, but only implied. Being thus scattered and hidden, these "laws" must then be "dug out" by learning and applying various rules of interpretation, which incidentally, are nowhere mentioned in the scriptures. For instance, we are told, we must have rules to tell when an example is binding and when it is not, when an inference is necessary and thus conclusions based on it binding, and so on. In the terms employed in a book rather popular among one party within the Church of Christ, we must apply these criteria: "generic and specific authority", "the rule of uniformity", "the rule of unity", "the rule of universal application", "the law of materiality", "the law of competence", "the law of limited application", and "the law of exclusion." Somehow, when we apply all of these and then arrive at "the law of worship" (or "the law of giving" or the "law of church organization" and so on), these "laws" are spiritual and so much better than the law of Moses.

The fact that "the law" concerning any aspect of Christian living is thus hidden, and has to be ferreted out by such a system of logic, or rather a polyglot system, is supposed to impart a superior character to this "law". The conclusion then is that this "new law" is spiritual, while the law of Moses was not. And this becomes the essential difference between the law of Moses and the Christian system, in our theological view of the matter. Instead of Christ redeeming us from the law, and setting us free from a system of legal demands (Col. 2:14-16), we conceive of his binding on us a harder, more stringent and much more difficult legal system!

But, what do the scriptures say? "The law is spiritual." Then what is the difference between the Jewish system and the Christian system? The difference is plainly stated in the book of Romans. It is this. Judaism was a system of law; Christianity one of grace. Under law, all the world became guilty before God, therefore law could not justify; now, the righteousness of God without law is manifested, salvation is by grace, with the result that a man is justified by faith without deeds of law (Rom. 3:20-28). John expresses this distinction like this: "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" Jno. 1:17).

The nature of salvation by law is this: "The man that doeth them shall live in them" (Gal. 3:12b). No flesh can be justified by works of law, since law results in sin (Rom. 3:19-20; Gal. 2:16). If righteousness comes through law, then Christ died in vain (Gal. 2:21).

On the other hand, the nature of salvation under Christ is this: "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace" (Rom. 4:16a). The righteousness of God which is by faith, and justification freely through grace have now been manifested through Jesus (Rom. 3:21-24).

We make a fundamental error when we conceive of Christianity as being a legal system wherein one has eternal life because he "keeps law". This error prevents a grasp of the theme of the book of Romans and results in such denials of plain statements as

the one which says "the law was not spiritual."

We must recognize that the difference between Judaism and Christianity is not that the first was an unspiritual legal system while the second is a spiritual legal system. Rather, the difference is that the first was a spiritual legal system, while the second is a spiritual system of grace! In a legal system alone, salvation would be conditioned on keeping every law perfectly, without one mistake, without a single error, with perfect understanding. In a system of grace, salvation is conditioned on Christ bearing our sins for us, and our receiving him by faith (Rom. 3:25-26). When we grasp the difference between a legal system and a grace system, then we can admit that the law of Moses was spiritual, and we can understand the argument that Paul makes in the book of Romans.—3117 *Sheridan, Loveland, Colo.*

UNITY, UNITY

STAN PAREGIEN

Jeremiah spoke of certain false prophets in his day who were deceiving the people with their prophecies of coming prosperity. The false prophets blinded the eyes of the Israelites with the words, "Peace, peace!" Jeremiah used four concise words to refute such speculations. The weeping prophet of God said, "There is no peace."

Centuries have passed since the days of Jeremiah, and with that flight of years certain changes have been wrought.

First, the cry has been altered. The statement being shouted from almost every pulpit in the brotherhood is, "Unity, unity!" It would be almost unthinkable for a preacher to hold a meeting and not speak at least one night on "How The Religious World Can Be United," or some similar topic. The inference—usually it is a bold affirmation—is that the preacher and the church to which he belongs have the key to Oneness. What the unsuspecting visitor doesn't realize is that there may be two or three other congregations of the same church in the community, all of which teach the same "plan" for unity—yet, not one of these congregations will recognize the other as being "faithful." A short investigation would probably reveal that each of these congregations is engaged in a Cold War against the others. They refuse to call on one another for prayer. They often will not even speak to one another. And, if all else fails, they pelt one another with party labels such as, "Liberals," "Anti's," "Digressives," etc. There is open division in the body of believers and no one knows it better than the congregations themselves. But, their preachers have the audacity to extend the invitation with words similar to these: "Why not embrace true Christianity by coming out of denominationalism and becoming a member of the church (little "c") of Christ?" The plea is immediately given a rubber-stamped "Amen" from the "faithful brethren." Should an individual come forward and be baptized, he finds himself becoming a member—not of a single united group of brethren, but of a warring

faction. It doesn't take long for the new member to find, as Dean Swift once said, that "We have just enough religion to make us hate each other."

Secondly, the modern cry is no longer a prophecy. It has, according to many, became a reality. Unity is no longer spoken of as something for which we must continually strive. Rather, it has already arrived. Such a careless attitude could only be termed absurd by any person with a passing acquaintance of the present condition of the church. Are we trying to deceive others into believing that we stand completely united, or are we trying to pull the wool over our own eyes? If your body received a serious slash, what would you do? Would you look the other way and try to pretend that your life-giving blood were not ebbing away? Certainly not! Then why do we try to stick our heads in the sand when it comes to the cut and bleeding body of Christ? Our strength, our power, and our influence in the world flows like the mighty Amazon—but, like that great river, our power is untamed, undirected, and useless due to our disunity.

The party spirit is the reef upon which the hopes of the Restoration Movement have been shattered. Now is the time for all Christians to pick up the pieces, to regroup our forces, and to begin practicing what we have been preaching. Only then will we experience the blessings that come when brethren dwell together in unity.
—3524 Anderson S.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico

BOOK NOTES

We will send this journal to you in bundles at ten cents per copy. You can have them on hand to pass along to others at appropriate times. Back copies are available at the same price. With this issue we complete two volumes of *Restoration Review* as a monthly (20 issues, 400 pages) and all the back numbers are available. Of the five volumes issued as a *quarterly* we have only half of the numbers available. These sell for 3 for $1.00. Some of these we consider especially outstanding. Volume 5, Numbers 2 and 3, for instance, have essays by Carl Ketcherside on *Agape: Foundation of Christian Fellowship* and *The Ground of Christian Fellowship*, both highly relevant to the work of unity. Ketcherside is here at his very best.

Those who have appreciated the many books by C. S. Lewis will be glad to read *The Christian World of C. S. Lewis* by Clyde Kilby. Only $4.50 in cloth. *Till We Have Faces* and *The Pilgrim's Regress*, novels by Lewis, are available in paperback at $1.95 and $1.45.

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones is now one of the most widely read of Christian writers. His latest, *Faith on Trial*, is a series of meditations on the well-known Psalm 73, and it is a book that deals with the problem of suffering, and why God allows the wicked to prosper. He has a way of causing the reader to think seriously about his